

# **South Dakota's Workforce Investment Act Annual Report**

## **Program Year 2001**

## **Letter from Warren Lotsberg, Chairperson *South Dakota Workforce Development Council***

On behalf of the South Dakota Workforce Development Council, I am pleased to submit the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Annual Report for Program year 2001. Program year 2001 marked the first year of operation for the WIA in South Dakota. This report is designed to reflect the major activities conducted during the program year.

WIA programs provide an important framework for developing public-private sector partnerships. These partnerships help prepare South Dakota's unskilled youth and adults for entry into the labor force, train individuals facing serious barriers to employment, provide specialized training to dislocated workers, and meet the future training and employment needs of South Dakota industry.

Historically, South Dakota has provided a comprehensive service delivery system for employers and jobseekers alike. With the solidification of the One-Stop Career Center System and the implementation of WIA, this system has continued its high standards of quality. As we look to the future and the challenges unique to our state and its workers, the Workforce Development Council is committed to guiding program activities through the intent of the Workforce Investment Act to best serve the citizens of our state.



Warren Lotsberg honors Cassandra Cadman, Outstanding Youth Participant, at the annual Workforce Investment Conference held in Mitchell, SD.

## ***South Dakota's Workforce Development System History***

As a single statewide service delivery area (SDA), the leadership and vision for South Dakota's One-Stop Career Center System has come from the South Dakota Workforce Development Council (SDWDC). The SDWDC has been the driving force behind workforce development since it was first formed under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA). This distinguished group of key state agency heads, employers, and other interested parties has guided the development of today's One-Stop delivery system in our state. The majority of employment and training programs are provided under the umbrella of the South Dakota Department of Labor, which also provides administrative support for the SDWDC. Under this structure, key employment and training programs like WIA, Wagner-Peyser, Unemployment Insurance, and Veterans' employment and training programs are brought together with the interests of economic development, vocational technical education, basic education, and vocational rehabilitation.

The SDWDC was formed to maintain the momentum for economic development and vitality by better connecting workforce strategies to economic needs. The seventeen member SDWDC is comprised of a majority of private sector members who represent the state's employers, labor unions, community leaders, and representatives of five state agencies including the Secretary of Labor, Secretary of Education and Cultural Affairs, Secretary of Human Services, Commissioner of the Governor's Office of Economic Development, and the Executive Director of the Board of Regents. The SDWDC members share a common purpose: to improve the services to employers and their current and future employees by streamlining the delivery of workforce and training services.

The purpose of the SDWDC continues to be to provide planning, coordination, monitoring, and policy analysis for the state training system as a whole and to advise the Governor on policies, goals, and standards for the development and implementation of effective programs.

In addition to the key policy decisions made at the state level, a good deal of local control has been built into the system in the form of local workforce boards. These boards, comprised by a majority business membership have been developed in each One-Stop Career Center location. The boards deal with a variety of local workforce issues ranging from School-to-Work (STW) to alternative schools to overall long term planning for WIA. A unique blend of stable state agencies and flexible local private non-profit organizations effectively delivers workforce services to our employer and participant customers.

## ***Employment Trends in South Dakota***

The South Dakota labor market appears to be functioning pretty well during the recent economic down-turn based on most indicators, including population trends, labor force participation rates, unemployment, and wage trends. Two areas of concern are the agricultural economy and nonfarm wage and salaried worker trends.

The July 2001 intercensal population estimates shows that the number of state residents continues to increase slowly, rising 0.1 percent from last year. The latest decennial figures show that the state's population increased from 1990 to 2000. The count of residents increased slower than the national trend, but was still up 8.5 percent over the decade.

State residents participate in the labor force at a very high rate. The latest annual Current Population Survey figures show that the South Dakota labor force participation rate was 72.7 percent in 2000. In other words, almost 73 percent of all residents age 16 years and over were in the labor force, either working or looking for work. This compares to a national average of 67.2 percent. Only five other states had a higher labor force participation rate than South Dakota during the reference period. The youth in the state were also active participants in the labor force. In 2000, approximately 66.3 percent of South Dakota's youth (age 16-19 years) were in the labor force. Nationally, 52.2 percent of the youth participated in the labor force.

Although the unemployment rate remains quite low, the unemployment rose significantly to 3.3 percent in 2001. In the previous year, the annual average unemployment rate was only 2.3. Because of the rural nature of the state and close connection to the agricultural economy, South Dakota typically enjoys low unemployment rates. The recent national recession has impacted the state economy, moving unemployment to higher levels. Layoffs in the manufacturing industry in 2000 and 2001 had a significant impact on the unemployment level and rate. Although layoffs are often reflected in Unemployment Insurance claims counts and unemployment statistics, the unemployment rate doesn't always parallel the claims counts trends.

The number and duration of Unemployment Insurance claims has risen significantly during the last two years; they were especially high in 2001. However, that trend has not translated into high unemployment rates. It appears that some unemployed workers are finding jobs and/or some of them remain employed at a second job. (It is possible to collect unemployment insurance benefits from a primary job and still be employed at a secondary job.) The state has traditionally had a large number of multiple job-holders and that characteristic might result in rising claims numbers without a corresponding steep increase in the number of unemployed. In addition, because of the lowered demand for works, some unemployed workers temporarily leave the labor force, waiting for things to improve.

Although job opportunities were lowered during the recent economic downturn, some laid-off workers have found employment with other companies. Nonfarm wage and salaried workers, which is a count of workers at jobs by place of work, increased slightly to 379,200 in 2001, resulting in a 0.3 percent from the previous year. This growth was quite a bit lower than the approximately 3.0 percent average annual increase since 1990.

The finance, insurance, and real estate industry grew the most in 2001, increasing by 6.9 percent. Businesses in the finance sector, especially financial services, added workers as a result of expansion to new locations across the state. The mining, manufacturing and services industries were all down from previous year averages, although the decrease in the service industry was the result of a federally-mandated reclassification of tribal government entities to the government classification (from the services industry).

Looking at long-term nonfarm wage and salaried worker trends, the Services industry has added the most workers over the last decade, increasing by 30,200 workers since 1990. The manufacturing; retail trade; and finance, insurance and real estate; and government industries have also added a significant number of workers. However, a portion of the growth in government happened in 2001 and was the result of tribal government being reclassified into that industry.

Although the agricultural industry does not match the nonfarm sector in direct job creation and wage trends, it is a significant part of the South Dakota economy. A recent university study of the impact of “agribusiness” in the state showed that it accounts for about 24 percent of the total value of production and services. A recent agribusiness trend has been a spurt in the number and size of ethanol plants in the state. Several plants are under construction or in the planning stage; they will begin production over the next few years. Since ethanol production is quite capital-intensive, not a lot of workers are hired to staff the plants. However, ethanol plants have a large economic impact because they create an additional demand for grain products.

The agricultural industry is very important for the survival of many rural communities. Many rural families have both farm and nonfarm jobs. In many cases, the nonfarm jobs provide most of the income; however the farm job is what ties the family to the rural community.

South Dakota worker wage trends are also a good indicator of what is happening in the labor market and average annual pay is rising. Those wage trends indicate a good labor market for workers. In recent years, wage increases have been higher than the change in inflation; consequently real wages for wage and salaried workers have increased. The 2001 annual pay for workers covered by unemployment insurance (including approximately 90 percent of all wage and salaried workers) increased 3.2 percent from the 2000 annual pay for covered workers. To be fair, probably not all the

pay increase can be attributed to a strong demand for workers; some of the change would be a result of layoffs of less experienced, lower-paid workers.

The demand for workers in both ag and nonag industries has a great impact on the labor market and labor exchange. In previous years, growing firms were constantly looking for workers; in some cases there were worker shortages for many types of workers. With a slowing economy, worker shortages have become a thing of the past, with a few exceptions. Certain types of skilled workers are still in high demand as businesses scurry to staff businesses. The registered nurses, teachers, engineers and pharmacists occupations have all been studied and discussed in terms of shortages. Recent legislative action has outlined what the state will do to produce a larger supply of registered nurses at public universities.

The future demand for workers is captured through occupational projections, which provide information about the future need for workers by occupation. They estimate the demand for new workers needed to fill jobs because of growth or replacement of working leaving the work force. State occupational projections indicate that the fastest growing occupations will require post-secondary education, with most of them in the computer or medical fields. However, the greatest demand for jobs will still be for occupations that require basically no post-secondary education. So, there will two great challenges with respect to the demand for new workers. One will be to provide trained and skilled workers for professional, technical and management jobs. The second challenge will be two provide good workers to fill jobs that require no post-secondary training, but tend to be lower paying and high turnover.

Job turnover data provides another perspective on demand. Job turnover represents the labor flows into the labor market and also between businesses. Research data on SD job turnover (using administrative wage records) shows a fairly high level of job turnover in many business sectors. Some of the turnover can be explained by the seasonal nature of the business sector in the state, but some of the turnover is related to job mismatches and/or because those industries staff many jobs that are considered stepping-stones or bridges to better careers. As with other types of demand, job turnover tends to drop during business slow-downs because the opportunity for a better job has decreased.

Just as the demand for workers has slowed, so has the supply of workers. The state population is relatively slow-growing and is getting older. These factors have a negative impact on the supply of workers. The supply of new workers entering the labor market has slowed in the last few years, compared to the early 1990s. According to wage record information from Unemployment Insurance administrative records, there were about 63,000 new workers appearing on payrolls in 2001 that were not on payrolls in 2000. Those workers come from many different sources, including workers moving to the state, residents previously unemployed, residents of other states commuting to SD to work, and new entrants and reentrants to the workforce. The new entrants would include high school students, college students, recent graduates, etc. Workers returning to the

work after absences because of long-term illness, family responsibilities, etc. would make up the reentrant category.

Another important issue related to the supply of workers and workforce development is determining what happens to students after they graduate from post-secondary training. And the second part of that issue is whether or not the graduate's knowledge and skills meet the employer's needs. Determining how many graduates are able to find jobs (that are related to their training) and at what wage are important measurements for determining the labor supply and workforce development. In addition, it is important to know the percentage of graduates remaining in the state. If they do not remain in the state, they cannot help meet the demand for workers. According to recent information on 2001 public university graduates from the SD Follow-up Project, approximately 82 percent of students originating in the state were still in the state six months after graduation, with about 2/3 of the total known to be working in the state. With respect to graduates not originating in South Dakota, approximately 42 percent were still in the state six months after graduation, with over half of total known to be working in the state. Additional research is needed to determine how many still remain after a longer time period.

Implementing an efficient labor market exchange will be a primary requirement for continued economic growth in the state. Effectively matching worker skills to employer needs will be key. Worker mismatches and the resulting turnover are counter-productive during low population and labor force growth. As the economy picks-up and job trends become more positive, the need for an efficient labor market exchange that will match workers to jobs becomes even more critical.

## ***Meeting the Challenges of Employment Trends in South Dakota***

Regional, national, and international economic changes have brought a demand for a highly skilled and educated workforce. South Dakota's previous agricultural based economy is developing and changing to meet these demands. Quality training is the key to success for both employers and employees.

To meet the challenge of the demands of the "new" economy requires a system grounded in specific skills, educational competencies, and work experiences. South Dakota's One-Stop Career Centers are the basis of this system in our state providing employers with a skilled, educated workforce and providing workers with an opportunity for economic security and self-sufficiency.

South Dakota's system capitalizes on the strengths of education, labor, rehabilitation, and social services to benefit all segments of our population. Youth, adults, dislocated workers, disabled individuals, and older workers will have the opportunity to utilize WIA services for their individual employment and training needs.

## ***Working together – SD's One-Stop Career Centers***

The state, through the network of One-Stop Career Centers, has developed a system that is customer oriented and makes maximum use of current technology to reach the greatest number of customers. Employers and job seekers have direct access through Internet technology or personal contact with One-Stop staff to assist in the employment and training process. The system is able to access the expertise and programs of partner entities such as education, rehabilitation, economic development, social services, and others as may be appropriate.

South Dakota has made considerable strides in utilizing technology to link related workforce services and bring them closer to the public. A broad range of information is currently available to customers through Internet access. The general public can self-register for services, access labor market information, use South Dakota's Job Bank and America's Job Bank, check out approved training providers and their levels of performance and access resume packages and other valuable information.

For employers, the system is able to offer relevant labor market information, a ready pool of job applicants, a referral and screening system, training programs, and a single point of contact for pertinent employment and training information. The system is able to respond quickly to the needs of the employer community.

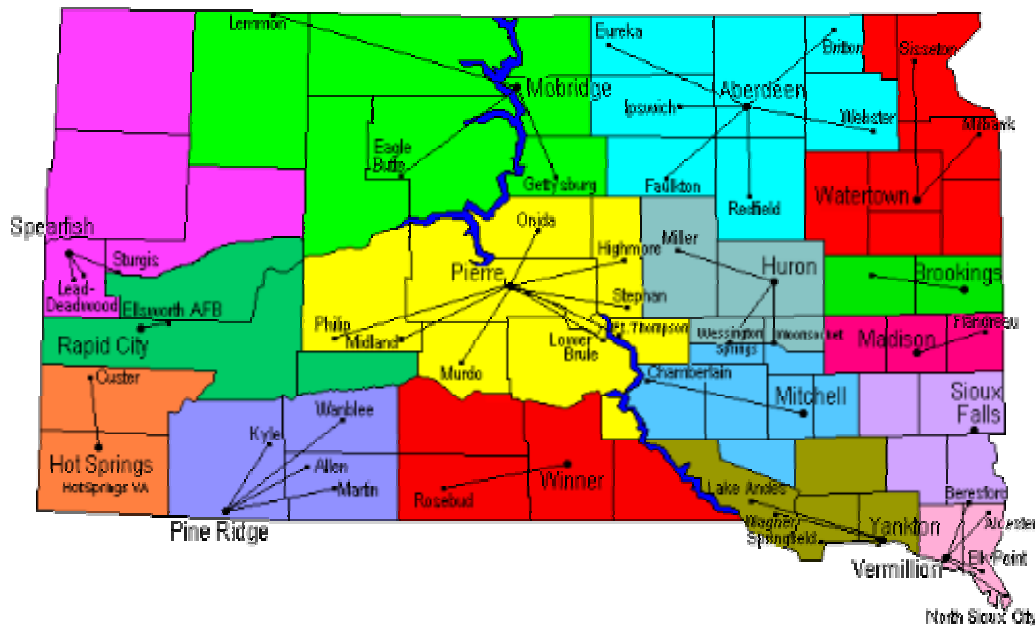
Job seekers also have ready access to labor market information, employment opportunities, unemployment insurance, employment guidance and counseling, training, as well as a single point of contact for employment and training information.

Services and activities are promoted and made available to the various segments of the workforce. Youth, adults, dislocated workers, veterans, disabled individuals, and older workers all have the opportunity for full access to WIA through the One-Stop Career Centers. Accommodations are easily made to allow any individual to benefit from services that may be appropriate.

The following services are available at certified One-Stop centers:

- Labor Exchange
- Veterans Employment Programs
- Unemployment Insurance
- Job Corps Recruitment and Placement
- Bonding Program
- Alien Labor Certification
- Dislocated Worker Retraining
- Adult Training Programs
- Youth Training Programs
- Food Stamp E&T
- Older Worker Training
- Occupational Skill Training
- Alternative School enrollment
- GED/Adult Education
- TANF
- Labor Market Information
- Aptitude/Interest/Basic Skills Assessment
- Tax Credit
- Job Search Assistance Workshops
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Resource Room
- Basic Skills Remediation

## One-Stop Career Centers Main offices and itinerant communities



### ***Service Delivery – Business Services***

Employers are critical to the success of South Dakota's One-Stop Career System. They can receive business services through the 19 certified One-Stop Career Centers and itinerant offices located throughout the state.

Employer services include:

- Computerized job matching
- Training services including basic skills, re-training, and skills upgrading
- Welfare-to-Work and Work Opportunity Tax Credits
- Rapid Response
- Clerical skills testing
- Free access to One-Stop Career Centers to recruit, interview, and screen applicants
- Resources on labor and employment law
- Veterans' services
- Alien labor certification

Employers can also access employment services through the Internet at <http://www.sdjobs.org>. Employers can list a job opening, search for applicants, and obtain information about issues related to doing business in South Dakota. By entering this site, a customer is able to access:

- Current and historical labor market information
- Unemployment Insurance (UI) information

- New hire reporting
- South Dakota's Job Bank
- America's Job Bank
- America's Career Kit
- Worker's Compensation information
- Workforce Investment Act Training Provider information
- Alien Labor Certification
- Labor and employment law

## ***Service Delivery – Job Seekers***

South Dakota One-Stop Career Centers, under WIA, ensure employment and training services to the universal customer. Once job seekers are assessed as needing occupational or skills training, one or more of the following program options may be available to them:

- WIA Adult Training
- WIA Youth Training
- WIA Dislocated Worker
- TAA and NAFTA-TAA assistance
- Veterans' Training
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

Services offered to job seekers through the One-Stop Career Center System include the following:

- Computer access to South Dakota's Job Bank, America's Job Bank, resume preparation tools, and labor market information
- Job referrals
- Veterans' services
- Job search assistance
- Job skills workshops
- Skills testing
- Career counseling
- Connection to educational opportunities
- Vocational assessment
- Job training opportunities

## ***WIA Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Programs***

Non-competitive funds are provided to local One-Stop Career Centers for their job training and education programs designed to assist individuals seeking employment.

Individualized services focused on a thorough assessment and development of an employment plan allows for customer choice.

Funding for competitive projects is used to contract for services offered by approved service providers, school districts, and business partners.

### **Youth Training Programs**

Youth training programs provide services to low-income youth ages 14 through 21. Programs are designed to prepare youth who are facing serious barriers to employment for participation in the labor force. This includes opportunities for assistance in attainment of a high school education with preparation for further education and occupational exploration, and training for eventual employment.

#### **Youth programs include the following:**

- **Occupational skills:** Educational and job skills program designed to provide youth with basic education, vocational assessment, career exploration, job search, job retention, job specific skills; and life-coping skills.
- **Alternative School Training:** Individual service strategies outline basic skills remediation if needed, course credits to be achieved, identification of an employment goal, and necessary life skills. Services must include preparation for postsecondary education and connect to the One-Stop Career Center system. The sites must meet the Department of Education's accreditation requirements.
- **Summer Opportunities:** Summer Opportunity Programs must meet all WIA program requirements (assessments, employability plans, work readiness and work sustainment skills, and performance measures). Academic competencies are reinforced through applied learning. Programs expose youth to the current and emerging technologies. Postsecondary training options demonstrate various career advancement routes. South Dakota broke the activity into two types of programs based on developmental readiness for the ages of youth served.
  - Programs for youth ages 14 and 15 spotlight careers that younger youth are not typically familiar with. Youth try their hand at activities using real tools of the trade and the responsibilities of being employed in different career areas.
  - Programs for youth ages 16 and 17 provide authentic skill development for an occupational area. Local employers co-sponsor and co-teach occupational skills in a wide variety of related jobs within an occupation.
- **Department of Corrections:** Occupational assessments with job preparation and retention skills programs for youth just prior to returning to their home community.
- **Stipends:** Awards for youth who complete the required program goals and then participate in additional career exploration.
- **Career opportunities:** Funds that would cover the expenses associated with participation in career-related training sponsored by other agencies; i.e., the AGC

sponsored Construction Trades Academies, ICA sponsored Youth Business Adventure, SDSMT sponsored Youth Engineering Adventure, etc.

The ability to provide long-term programming and then to even provide a minimum of 12 months of follow-up is still evolving.

The locals expanded services by paying registrations for WIA eligibles to attend career activities sponsored by other agencies, provided transportation to review postsecondary educational settings, and revamped their summer programs. They are discovering that with these new programming options, youth are interested in pursuing more services under WIA and remaining in programs.

Each local One-Stop Career Center receives an allocation to provide the following training options:

- On-the-Job Training (OJT): training by an employer for a participant who is engaged in productive work to develop the knowledge and skills essential to the performance of the job.
- Work Experience Activities: designed for the participant to gain knowledge of demands of the work place and good work habits which can assist the participant in obtaining unsubsidized employment.
- Occupational Skills Training: activity is tailored to meet specific needs of the participant based on aptitude, interests, and basic skills. It provides an educational program that leads to higher wages and high demand occupations. This activity may be long- or short-term occupational training normally done in a classroom environment with a qualified instructor.

WIA encourages post secondary education opportunities for youth. The funds provide postsecondary training in two types of situations.

- Allow high school youth to take a postsecondary course that would provide credit for high school graduation and jump-start their attaining an advanced education degree.
- Allow a high school graduate to participate in DOL approved postsecondary programs leading to employment in high demand/high wage occupations.

### ***Adult Training Programs***

Adult training programs provide services to persons age 18 and over with a priority of service given to low-income families and recipients of public assistance. These programs lead to increased employment, higher earnings, and reduced welfare dependency.

**Adult training programs include the following:**

- **Intensive Services:** Individuals who are unable to obtain suitable employment after receiving core level services may be referred for Intensive Services. These are activities designed for the individual to learn about the labor market, receive employment guidance, and set a plan leading to suitable employment. Allowable activities include: assessment, employment counseling, employment planning, pre-vocational services, and case management.
- **Service Provider Training:** This training is from a community-based educational/job skills program designed to provide participants with job specific skills, vocational assessment, career exploration, basic education, job search skills, job retention skills, and life-coping skills.
- **Customized Skills Training:** This type of training is designed for high demand occupations. Customized training is training: (a) that is designed to meet the special requirements of an employer (including a group of employers); (b) that is conducted with a commitment by the employer to employ or in the case of incumbent workers, continue to employ an individual on successful completion of the training; and (c) for which the employer pays for not less than 50 percent of the cost of the training. Such training may be an on-going project or a one-time project to fulfill a particular demand.
- **Postsecondary Individualized Skill Training:** Formal classroom training provided by the approved training providers leading to higher wages and high demand occupations.

Each local One-Stop Career Center receives an allocation to provide the following training options:

- **On-the-Job Training (OJT):** training by an employer for a participant who is engaged in productive work to develop the knowledge and skills essential to the performance of the job.
- **Work Experience Activities:** designed for the participant to gain knowledge of the world of work and to develop good work habits, which can assist the participant in obtaining unsubsidized employment.
- **Individualized Skills Training:** activity is tailored to meet specific needs of the participant based on aptitude, interests, and basic skills. It provides an educational program that leads to higher wages and high demand occupations. This activity may be long- or short-term occupational training normally done in a classroom environment with a qualified instructor. Most programs are provided through the state technical institutes.

## ***Dislocated Worker Programs***

Dislocated Worker Programs provide basic readjustment and retraining services for workers unemployed as the result of a business closure or mass layoff. Rapid Response is conducted by the state which initiates a plan of action in response to worker dislocations.

Each local One-Stop Career Center has access to WIA funds to provide the following opportunities:

- **Basic Readjustment:** assistance in preparing for job transition. This service includes assessment, provision of labor market information, employment planning, and other work readiness activities.
- **On-the-Job Training (OJT):** training by an employer for a participant who is engaged in productive work to develop the knowledge and skills essential to the performance of the job.
- **Individualized Skills Training:** activity is tailored to meet specific needs of the participant based on aptitude, interests, and basic skills. It provides an educational program that leads to higher wages and high demand occupations. This activity may be long- or short-term occupational training normally done in a classroom environment with a qualified instructor. Most programs are provided through the state technical institutes.
- **Work Experience Activities:** designed for the participant to gain knowledge of the world of work and to develop good work habits. This activity is very limited and may not be appropriate for most dislocated workers.

## ***Service Delivery – Job Training***

**Service provider training** is from a community-based educational/job skills program designed to provide participants with job specific skills, vocational assessment, career exploration, basic education, job search skills, job retention skills, and life-coping skills.

**Customized skills training** is designed for high demand occupations. Customized training is training: (a) that is designed to meet the special requirements of an employer (including a group of employers); (b) that is conducted with a commitment by the employer to employ or in the case of incumbent workers, continue to employ, an individual on successful completion of the training; and (c) for which the employer pays for not less than 50 percent of the cost of the training. Such training may be an on-going project or a one-time project to fulfill a particular demand.

**Special projects** funds are for statewide workforce investment activities authorized in WIA, regardless of whether the funds were allocated through the youth, adult, or dislocated worker funding streams. Special project funds are also to be used for SDWDC costs, audits, staff, overhead, or other administrative costs.

## ***Service Delivery – Supportive Services***

The intent of WIA is to assist individuals overcome barriers to employment. South Dakota recognizes that training may not address other issues that can make the road to self-sufficiency difficult. The judicious use of supportive assistance can be an integral component of a comprehensive plan of service.

Supportive services may include the following:

### **Youth Supportive Services**

1. Transportation Assistance;
2. Health Care Services;
3. Child Care Assistance;
4. Training-Related Clothing;
5. Lodging Assistance.

### **Adult and Dislocated Worker Supportive Services**

1. Transportation Assistance;
2. Health Care Services;
3. Child Care Assistance;
4. Training-Related Clothing);
5. Lodging Assistance;
6. Job Search Allowance;
7. Relocation.

## Success Stories



**WIA Award Winners** – Left to right – Denise Johnson, Cassandra Cadman, Renee Peterson, Becki Lemke, Karen Getz, Denis Germane, and John Schipper.

### **Outstanding Partner CMI Architectural Products, De Smet SD Nominated by: Jacqueline Nelson, Brookings Area Career Learning Center**

CMI Architectural Products represents the ideal for WIA partners. Roger Monson is the president of CMI and also chairs the local workforce council. He gives freely of his time and experience to the Brookings Area Career Learning Center. In addition to coordinating the search for a director, he provided professional guidance and training to the new director as she learned the ropes.

The company was instrumental in refining the efficiency of the center's computer lab. Staff from CMI's computer department analyzed the technological needs of the CLC and helped with getting the centers network up and running. The professional assistance

from CMI provides the center's participants an efficient networked computer training system. This help saved the CLC considerable expense.

CMI Architectural has truly assisted the career center in the delivery of WIA programs and is most worthy of receiving this award.

### **Outstanding Youth Program Crime Camp**

#### **Nominated by: Cornerstones Career Learning Center, Huron**

Crime Camp is a multi-disciplinary learning experience through which youth discover the links between classroom learning and careers in law enforcement, health care, media, and forensic science. Students spent time completing classroom activities, field experiences, laboratory experiments, research projects, and talks with professionals from four of six career clusters.

The framework of the camp was the investigation of a mock crime. Students took on the role of police officers, crime scene investigators, forensic scientists, emergency medical personnel, radiologists, pathologists, coroners, anthropologists, lawyers, bailiffs, court reporters, newspaper reporters, and graphic designers. In these roles the students developed skills in a variety of disciplines.

The camp dealt with an additional problem as 9 of the 13 students were diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder. This required high-energy and high-interest presentations. As a group, the students raised their reading level over one-full grade level.

### **Outstanding Adult Program**

#### **Adult Education & Family Literacy, Rapid City**

#### **Nominated by: Career Learning Center of the Black Hills**

In 1996, the Career Learning Center of the Black Hills assumed the responsibility for administering AEL programs that included adult basic education, GED preparation, and English as a Second Language. This program became the largest single program in the state.

During the program year there were 784 individuals who completed the TABE pre-test, 706 of these met AEL requirements. This past year the CLC had the largest GED graduating class in their history. There were 264 individuals that identified earning a GED as their primary or secondary goal and 206 of the 264 succeeded. This is a 78% success rate. The state standard is 30%.

The success of the program is due to the emphasis of focusing on higher level thinking skills versus memorization of subject material. Curriculum relates to the real world and real life applications. The instructors continually emphasize that earning a GED is just the beginning of lifelong learning. Renee Peterson accepted the Outstanding

Adult Program Award as the coordinator of the AEL Program at the Career Learning Center of the Black Hills:

**Outstanding Professional Staff Person  
Karen Getz  
Nominated by: Custer Youth Corrections**

Karen would characterize herself as just an ordinary person doing her job. But it is clear to others that she has consistently developed a winning program to transition youth from the Custer Youth Corrections Center to careers and educational opportunities on the outside.

Karen understands how great the possibility of recidivism if the youth return to the environment that brought them to Custer in the first place. Transitioning the youth to stable living situations is often the first order of business followed by education or employment. As such Karen's classes include many life skill components. Many of her participants have never been exposed to concepts of earning a living, paying bills, or saving for the future. She provides the building blocks for the students to become productive members of society.

The restrictive nature of the correctional facility compounds the difficulties that Karen faces in working with the students. She has successfully worked with the center to restructure the program to allow her participants to leave the facility to pursue the career objects she and the students have developed.

Karen works hard to ensure that the students formal education program is heavily connected to career exploration and career development. She has built successful partnerships with the Job Corps center, Western Dakota Technical Institute, the local community and the One-Stop. Karen, indeed, is an ordinary person bringing a new level of sophistication to career education working in extraordinary circumstances with extraordinary people.

**Outstanding Youth Participant  
Cassandra Cadman  
Nominated by: Career Learning Center of the Black Hills and  
the Rapid City Academy**

Cassie Cadman was the commencement speaker at the Rapid City Academy graduation ceremony this last spring. It was a difficult road leading to that night.

A single mom raised Cassie and home was not always a comforting place. Parties, fights, and the police were not uncommon at home. Responsibility came early. She had to take care of herself and her siblings. One of her brothers is severely mentally disabled and another is struggling to stay in school. She has cooked and cleaned for her brothers and made sure they made it to school. It was a tough life and she began skipping school and doing drugs.

School counselor suggested Cassie try the Academy at the CLC. School became very important to her and she began to realize there was another life that she could choose. When her brother was failing in school she sat in class with him to offer her help. It was her determination that helped her brother to improve his grades ... that ... and he knew Cassie would come to school with him again if he didn't keep it up.

Cassie worked with the CLC staff on developing a career plan. She discovered that the medical field is her career choice. She enrolled at Western Dakota Technical Institute this fall to pursue a diploma in Phlebotomy. This is her first step to becoming economically self-sufficient, eventually wants to continue her education in the nursing field. She knows she can have a peaceful, happy life and work in a field that will make a difference.

### **Outstanding Adult Participant Holly Vielle**

#### **Nominated by: Career Learning Center of the Black Hills**

We strive to be role models for our clients. However, our clients often times become our role models. Holly Vielle is that individual.

Holly was 8 months pregnant and knew she had to leave an abusive situation. She was afraid for the safety of her baby. She sought safety and relocated to Rapid City and moved into a women's shelter. The staff at the shelter referred her to the Career Learning Center.

As Holly and the CLC worked on assessments and developing a plan she realized she could obtain training and gain employable skills. She enrolled in the computer classes at the CLC and advanced to the Computer Software Applications course. As soon as she could she moved into an apartment with her new baby. Her daughter had health problems with frequent trips to the emergency room. All the while she never complained. In passing she mentioned that someday she would have furniture. The CLC referred her to the Mission Thrift Store and she volunteered her time in exchange for some furnishings for her apartment.

Holly's goal was to get off of TANF as quickly as she could. Without transportation it was difficult but not impossible for her to complete the CSA program at the CLC. On graduation from the program she became employed with Mini Sose Inter Tribal Water Rights Coalition. After 4 months she was promoted to research assistant and given a raise. Throughout her time with the CLC and her employment, transportation was a problem. She found her way to training, the job, and day-care either with public transportation or walking. Recently the CLC implemented a program to provide a means for single working parents to purchase a used well-maintained vehicle at a low cost. Holly was the first successful applicant for a car.

### **Outstanding Large Employer Quality Tool**

#### **Nominated by: Brookings Area Career Learning Center**

Quality Tool of Brookings has long had a great working relationship with the local One-Stop and Career Learning Center. They have worked in cooperation with DOL programs to provide successful opportunities for our clients. One example is a recent On the Job Training arrangement. The One-Stop and CLC had been working with an individual who had been incarcerated the last 9 years and had no work experience. Quality Tool was approached and assumed the risk of employing such a person in spite of the previous criminal background and lack of work history.

Quality Tool went out of their way to assist the client in making court appearances and appointments with lawyers. The participant had problems with co-workers, that in many work settings would have resulted in his dismissal. However, Quality Tools took it upon themselves to help the participant work through the issues and maintain employment.

The participant ran afoul of the law once again. Quality Tool kept his job open and bailed him out of jail. However, as in real life, the story does not always end on a good note. The participant skipped the state that evening. Although it did not end with a positive outcome for the participant, the attitude of Quality Tool was upbeat. The company supervisor stated they could feel good about the chance they gave to a young man to turn his life around. The company truly went above and beyond with their willingness and patience to back up that attitude.

### **Outstanding Small Employer Rapid Motors, Inc.**

#### **Nominated by: Career Learning Center of the Black Hills**

Rapid Motors has worked with the local One-Stop and CLC for several years. The company strives to provide a positive environment for their employees to be successful. They have accepted referrals to openings and made room for On the Job Training arrangements or graduates of the CLCs Computer Software Applications program.

The company is involved in many community activities that benefit not only our participants but many youth and adults in the Rapid City area. A strong commitment to community service is inherent with Rapid Motors.

Rapid Motors was instrumental in kicking off a program developed by the CLC called "Driving to Success". This program provides well-maintained used vehicles at a minimal cost to selected single parents in need of transportation. Rapid Motors donated the first vehicle to the program that went to the WIA Adult Participant winner, Holly Vielle. The owners of Rapid Motors strongly believe in helping individuals who are willing to help themselves.

## ***Summer Youth Opportunity Program Success Stories***

### **Aberdeen Area Career Planning Center, Aberdeen**

Nine youth completed community service projects in order to understand job tasks for various careers. The youth learning how to do basic carpentry tasks, skills in setting up a business, and operating a nonprofit organization. The youth then built shelves and organized the food to set up a food pantry.

The AACPC also had WIA youth participate in the Upward Bound project at Northern State University. The AACPC staff provided career information for the all the Upward Bound youth.

WIA youth that were transitioning into college participated in a campus life preparation project. Youth were given an in-depth exposure to where to find services on campus and participated in study and remediation skills activities.

### **Career Learning Center of the Black Hills, Rapid City and Spearfish**

The Engineering Technology Academy held on the campus of the School of Mines and Technology had 18 youth attend. The hands-on activities in mechanical and civil engineering got the youth involved in racing cars, robots, and computers. Held on the campus of South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, youth had the opportunity to check out campus classes and life.

The Northern Hills project was held on the campus of Black Hills University and highlighted the opportunities in Industrial Technology. Four technical fields provided the basis of the hands on activities including carpentry, machines and metals, computer aided drafting, and electronics and robotics. Twelve students demonstrated academic and occupational linkages through various classroom activities in addition to the occupational skill activities.

### **Cornerstones, Huron**

Twelve youth participated in technology-based career awareness and skills building project. The youth could complete up to eight units on careers and various software applications. Youth designed and published their own web pages and contacted businesses about technology careers in Huron.

### **Southeast Job Link, Yankton and Vermillion**

Using the Real Game, youth from four school districts put reading and math skills together to demonstrate life skills. The careers exposed through the game were often linked to the area communities with guest speakers providing additional information on opportunities in the related fields. Youth demonstrated career research, job hunting, and job keeping skills throughout the program.

### **The Right Turn, Pierre**

Sixteen youth successfully completed the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Basing the career exposure activities on the careers needed to by Lewis and Clark to travel up the Missouri River in 1804 youth discovered that many careers still are needed by today's workers although technology has greatly impacted the tasks involved. This was the youth program award winner.

### **Volunteer of America – Dakotas/ Turning Point, Sioux Falls**

Twenty youth used the portfolio development approach to exploring their interests, abilities, and skills to expand their knowledge of careers. Using tools of the community, newspaper and brochures, the youth discovered the numerous career opportunities around them. Each morning was filled with tours, videos of careers, Internet research, speakers and other activities. The youth demonstrated employability skills by following the participation requirements.

### **Watertown Area Career Learning Center, Watertown**

Seventeen youth completed a six-week exposure to six career clusters including Ag, Automotive, CAD drafting, Electronics, Health occupations, Machine Tool, and Welding. The activities were held at the local multi-district training school as well as at the Career Learning Center. The youth demonstrated basic employability skills by following the participation requirements and completed job search activities.

### **Woap'e Te'ca, Lower Brule**

Discovering how math, communications, and science were used in careers was the connecting element to studying careers in the region. Speakers from the Indian Health Services, a fitness center, Red Cross, Bison ranch, College Science Department all linked academic skills to their daily activities. The youth tried their hand at several of the skills needed in each profession.

## ***South Dakota's WIA Performance Indicators***

South Dakota has established operating procedures for data collection and handling to ensure the quality and integrity of the data. The WIA data collection and compilation process is completely automated. Written and verbal instructions are provided to staff who collect and compile the data.

Performance data submitted on federal reports are verified and validated by state staff. The process involves checking the accuracy of a sample of the computerized records. The data verification process is the verification of the accuracy of keyed entries by their comparison with the original source(s) to identify and correct errors. Data validation involves checking the accuracy of the data entered into the computerized data base. Although data may be correctly transcribed from the forms, the data may not be accurate or logical because of recording errors. South Dakota is committed to continuous improvement of its information and data system.

State WIA staff conduct annual desk audits and/or on-site evaluations of workforce investment activities by program for each service provider. A comprehensive and thorough review will document effective practices being utilized by local offices. It will identify training and/or technical assistance needs of staff. Evaluations result in establishing and implementing methods for continuous improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of the statewide workforce investment system in improving employability for job seekers and competitiveness for employers.

The evaluation process includes a self-evaluation by the service provider. A review by state staff of the administrative, procedural, programmatic, and financial aspects of the service provider assesses the extent to which the provider is complying with Federal regulations and guidelines. State staff review program data for verification and validation. Interviews are conducted with local staff, WIA participants, and employers. Program goals and progress toward meeting and/or exceeding performance standards are reviewed.

State staff provide an overview of the results/recommendations of the evaluation during an exit meeting with the local program administrator and staff. A written report of deficiencies and a plan for correcting deficiencies is provided within 30 days of the evaluation review. Technical assistance is provided when applicable

While South Dakota has made every effort to assure performance measure numbers are accurate, it must be noted that a new One-Stop computer operating system was recently launched. This operating system is in a state of flux, and additional changes in the programming may result in the necessity for South Dakota to submit an amendment to this annual report.

Following are statements regarding the cost of workforce investment activities relative to the effect of the activities on the performance of the participants as required in WIA section 136(d)(2)(c):

South Dakota WIA activities have been conducted in a manner that is fully compliant and consistent with our Unified Plan for Workforce Investment. The state's Workforce Development Council (WDC) has ensured all funds have been used appropriately and for the stated purpose of WIA for eligible youth, adults, and dislocated workers.

Activities have been designed to meet the individual needs of participants. Customer choice is the key principal to program success. At times, customer choice has prompted a greater mix of services to assist the participant meet their specific educational and occupational goals. As such, the programs have been quite flexible and creative in helping individuals utilize available WIA tools leading them to successful outcomes consistent with their individual service strategy.

The WDC truly believes WIA funds are an investment that need to be carefully weighed for the greatest return to the participant, the community, the state, and ultimately to the nation. In treating these resources as investment capital we are careful to be prudent but demanding with our ventures. The state exercises great care in delivering high quality services at the most reasonable cost. In other words, we expect a big bang for the buck.

The state expects a high level of motivation from participants and service providers alike. This high level of personal energy working together creates a positive environment. This generates a platform for the delivery of core, intensive and training services that is productive.

The WDC utilizes its expertise to allocate funds for activities with the expectation that all customers, both job seekers and employers, will be served. This methodology also capitalizes on the use of the latest technology and use of effective service providers. A review of WIA performance for the program year suggests the state has invested its resources wisely. The return on the WIA investment in South Dakota has been very productive for the program and beneficial to participants and the state.